

Frostbite is a severe reaction to cold exposure that can be permanently damaging. Symptoms include: loss of feeling and a white or pale appearance in fingers, toes, or nose and earlobes.

Hypothermia can be brought on when the body temperature drops to less than 90°F. Symptoms include uncontrollable shivering, slow speech, memory lapses, stumbling, drowsiness, and exhaustion.

If frostbite or hypothermia is suspected, begin warming the person slowly and seek immediate medical assistance. Warm the person's trunk first. Use your own body heat to help. Arms and legs should be warmed last because stimulation of the limbs can drive cold blood toward the heart and lead to heart failure. Put the person in dry clothing and wrap their entire body in a blanket.

Never give a frostbite or hypothermia victim something with caffeine or alcohol in it. Caffeine, a stimulant, can cause the heart to beat faster and alcohol, a depressant, can slow the heart. Both can hasten the ill effects of cold body temperatures.

